

# JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

Chairman  
Masayuki Sawano

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Editors:  
Chuzo Yamada

Ronald G. Korver

CABLE CODE: JAPACONCIL, ADDRESS: CHRISTIAN CENTER, 2,4-CHOME GINZA, TOKYO, JAPAN

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## DELEGATION TO U.S. TO APPEAL FOR PEACE IN VIETNAM

A five-man delegation of Japanese Christian leaders will leave for the U.S. around July 20, for a three-week visit, to discuss with American Christian leaders, statesmen and scholars possible ways of initiating negotiations to bring about a cessation of hostilities in Vietnam.

The "Christian Emergency Conference for Peace in Vietnam" which is sponsoring the delegation includes more than 120 representatives of about 90 Christian churches and organizations.

According to a letter drafted by the Conference (see the June 15 issue of Japan Christian Activity News for full contents of letter), the members of the mission to the U.S. are expected to emphasize 1) the immediate suspension of U.S. bombings of North Vietnam; 2) an immediate ceasefire and a solution arrived at by an independent decision of the Vietnamese, and 3) the pull out of the U.S. troops from South Vietnam.

Reverend Dr. Isamu Omura, Moderator of the General Assembly of the United Church of Christ in Japan, has consented to head the team after repeated requests from the Conference to do so. Dr. Omura described the Conference as a "voluntary group" of Christians concerned over the war in Vietnam. He is the only member of the delegation who is not a member of the Conference and has emphasized that he participates as an individual and not as the Moderator of the U.C.C.J. Dr. Omura also stated that in his participation he is not bound by the three points in the letter-statement issued by the Conference.

Other members of the delegation are Kanichi Nishimura (UCCJ), Socialist member of the House of Representatives; Yoshiaki Iizaka (UCCJ), Gakushuin University professor and Secretary of the International Affairs Committees of the



Japan NCC and EACC: Kosaku Yamaguchi (Episcopalian), assistant professor at Momoyama Gakuin University; and Mrs. Hatsue Nomiya (Quaker) of the Women's Christian Temperance Union of Japan.

In response to the letter from the Conference, particularly the portion which expressed the hope that Christians of both lands would be "able to think together, pray together, and act together concerning the urgent issue of peace in Vietnam," the Japan Committee of the Division of Overseas Missions of the NCC in New York has volunteered to try to arrange contacts with church groups and government officials in the U.S.A.

The estimated cost of the visit is ¥3 million, all of which is being raised from the churches in Japan.

#### REVIVAL OF OLD RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS IN "NEW" AND MILITANT FORMS

The postwar resurgence of old religious traditions in "new" and militant forms is one of the most significant developments on the Asian scene today. The secular press in Japan is giving increased attention to this phenomenon.

The emergence of the various shades of "freedom" movements has produced the proper climate to again assert the primacy of the native faiths which had long been on the defensive and usually on the decline in popular following. Today, especially in Buddhist countries, but not limited to them, reform movements contain a strong religious emphasis and the struggle is as much for the restoration of the native faith to its "rightful" place as for achieving political liberty and/or national identification.

In India, a militant Hinduism was responsible for the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi. This movement is at present putting increasing pressure on political institutions.

In Pakistan, the powerful focus of Islamic militancy is Maulana Nadoodi. The attempt to replace President Ayub Khan with Miss Jinnah during the last election revealed the power of those who plan for the day of a Muslim theocracy in Pakistan.

The Iglesia ni Cristo, "Church of Christ" in the Philippines, founded in 1914, by the magnetic Christian evangelist, Felis Manalo, has appealed to the rootless and dispossessed of a country in transition. Described by their leaders as a "doctrinal revolt against the Roman Church," the church claims about three and a half million adherents. In elections, its bloc voting strength (claims 80,000 votes or one-ninth of the total electorate) makes it a major repository of political power and commands respect from political professionals.

As noted above, predominant among these movements, which are demanding recognition at the centers of power, is militant Buddhism. In many respects such action is quite contrary to Buddha's message of compassion, non-violence and "love," but there is a history of militant Buddhist clergy leading violent outbreaks from time to time.

In Ceylon, the monks have been involved in making and breaking governments. Assuming a major role in the defeat of the Kotelawala government in 1956, a monk of this same organization then later proceeded to assassinate Prime Minister Bandaranaike, whom they had brought to power. In the 1960 general election and in the recent return to power of Dudley Senanayake and the United National Party, the presence of the Buddhist clergy was obvious.

In Vietnam, President Ngo Dinh Diem lost his power and life before Buddhist



pressure. Human torches, street demonstrations and bloody battles have unseated several governments.

In Burma, active intervention by the Buddhist clergy resulted in the emergence of Ne Win's military regime which leans heavily to the left. Pressure also resulted in Buddhism becoming the State religion.

In Japan, Soka Gakkai, the most well organized and potentially most powerful of these religious movements, preaches the militant Buddhism of Nichiren and seeks political office. Claiming about one-tenth of Japan's population, its bloc voting strength is making strong advances. Membership includes people from all walks of life, but a distinctive feature is the preponderance of those between 19 and 30 years of age. Vietnamese monks have come to Japan to study Soka Gakkai organization, a semi-military form particularly characteristic of Nichiren-related groups.

Old religious traditions with militant stances of varying degrees, utilizing modernized forms with a strong sense of immediacy are eliciting increased response from the new generation in Asia.

#### SPIRITUAL UNITY URGED BY WORLD FEDERALIST OF KONKOKYO SECT

Parallel with the movements described in the foregoing article in infusing new meaning to old ceremonies and teachings, but without the militant stance and involvement in politics and with an attitude of tolerance and understanding toward other religions, are such "old" new religions as Konkokyo.

The secular press in Japan has considered statements by Toshio Miyake, senior minister of the Konkokyo sect, made before his departure from Japan to attend the World Congress of World Federalists, which met in San Francisco on June 20, as having a news value.

"World Federation proposals, which do not include a place for the spiritual unification of the people, are lacking," said Miyake. "Religious solidarity of all mankind" is the necessary support for any goal of world peace, he stressed.

He also called for religious leaders to strip themselves of sectionalism and to fight hard jointly for peace. He noted that World Federation would not achieve its end merely on the strength of world law, but that amicable relations among all must be encouraged along with the development of world law.

Konkokyo, one of the "old" new religions, is considered one of the most stable of the "new" religious movements. Holding a monotheistic view of God (The Great Father of the Universe) quite different from the conception of deity in Shinto thought (Konkokyo started as a Shinto sect in 1859 and most of the ceremonies are still Shintoistic), it has been suggested by students of religious history that the founder, Konko Daijin, a farmer, was influenced by some of the Kakure Kirishitan (hidden Christian communities which survived during the many years when Christianity was banned.)

#### OMI BROTHERHOOD

The following are excerpts from "Omi Brotherhood; What It Is and What It Does" by William P. Woodard, which appeared in the June 18 issue of the Japan Times.

"Omi Brotherhood, an organization of Christian laymen, has been one of the more unique 'experimentation- demonstrations' of the Christian movement in Japan.

"Founded some six decades ago, it takes its name from the province (kuni) of



Omi on the shores of Lake Biwa where its founder, Merrell Vories, lived when he first came to this country in 1905, and remained until his death in May 1964.

"The headquarters and affiliated institutions of the Brotherhood are still in the town of Omi Hachiman (pop. 45,000) about 30 miles northeast of Kyoto and the churches it has planted are all located in neighboring towns around the shores of the lake.

"Organized in the first instance by a small group of local Christian commercial school students and their creative and devoted English teacher, Omi Brotherhood in its early and as yet unorganized period should be ranked with the famous Protestant "bands" - - Kumamoto, Sapporo, Yokohama - - which sprang up at the beginning of the Meiji Era.

"Its first brotherly act was for the students to share their meager allowances and earnings with their foreign teacher, who had lost his position because of his ardent--and from the point of view of the local Buddhist priests, definitely too successful--efforts as a teacher of Bible classes.

"....the essence of the organization itself is that it is a Brotherhood. Therefore, the identity of the individual members has been merged with the group. But the name of the founder and central figure, who in 1919 married Miss Maki Hitotsuyanagi, daughter of Viscount Hitotsuyanagi, and later became a Japanese subject, will go down in history alongside other great Protestant leaders of the century who had left the indelible stamp of their faith and character on the Christian movement of this land.

"Omi Brotherhood, as originally conceived was a society of Christian laymen dedicated to the conduct of their personal, business, and community affairs in accordance with the teachings of Jesus. Although its industrial department was incorporated and engaged in various business enterprises of considerable magnitude, its primary object was and still is not profit-making for the participants but Christian witness and service. All income over and above operating costs, including salary allowances, has been devoted to the support of Christian activities such as sanitorium, a community library, a YMCA, a kindergarten, and a primary, junior high, and senior high school, and to the establishment and development throughout the province of Christian centers which later developed into churches. In addition to financial aid, members of the Brotherhood give personal leadership to these centers until they become independent. Altogether 11 churches, including the largest in Omi Hachiman, have been either founded or assisted by the Brotherhood.

"The influence of foreign laymen on the spread of the Christian movement in Japan during the past century has been truly remarkable. Their contribution has been so significant, in fact, that it seems strange that more effort has not been made to encourage such activity.

"Without committees and boards...some laymen singlehandedly have been magnificently creative, and have developed work that has been remarkably worthwhile. Of course, no one know how many have tried to do this and failed. Their number may be legion. Some, like Dr. William Merrell (Vories) Hitotsuyanagi, however, have been remarkably successful. . . . "

#### YOUTH SUMMER SERVICE PROJECTS

The Youth Commission of the National Christian Council of Japan has organized three service projects for the summer of 1965.

An ecumenical work camp will build a chapel, a sun room and a kitchen at



the Gotemba Colony for mentally retarded children which is sponsored by Christian educators and located at the foot of Mt. Fuji. From work experience, Bible study, corporate worship and discussion, the campers will form a small Christian community of 30 to 35 youth from Japan, U.S.A. and Southeast Asian Countries and work with the people of the local area. English will be used in the camp. The date for the camp is July 14 - August 11.

A high school work camp will level ground, build a road and construct a dormitory at the Sedana Livestock Center in Hokkaido. About 30 Japanese youth of high school age will have an experience of Christian community and the opportunity to witness through the testimony of work. The date of the camps is July 28 - August 11.

Youth in Industry will be centered in factories in Hokkaido and Osaka. Holding regular factory jobs the young people will examine the relevance of Christian faith to economic life through discussion with co-laborers, management and community leaders. The students will live together, their earnings covering living costs. The date for the camp at Sapporo is July 15 - August 16 and July 17 - August 16 at Osaka.

#### EIGHT TO ATTEND SALVATION ARMY'S CENTENARY IN LONDON

Eight Japanese of the Salvation Army have journeyed to London, where the Army was founded by William Booth on July 2, 1865, to take part in special gatherings celebrating the Army's Centenary.

Lieut. Commissioner Koshi Hasegawa, Territorial Commander of the Salvation Army in Japan, led the delegation, which was granted a civic reception by the Lord Mayor of London at London's historic Guildhall.

The proceedings are to be officially opened by Queen Elizabeth II.

#### NIHON LUTHERAN CHURCH TO INITIATE WORLD MISSION

The first overseas missionaries of the Nihon Lutheran Church will be medical missionaries according to a resolution taken at the General Conference of the Church in May.

The Japanese doctors will be sent to India in 1967. It is hoped that one of the doctors can be supported by sister Lutheran churches in Asia while the other doctor is supported by the church in Japan.

This significant action marks the beginning of a world mission for the 2,000 member mission of the Lutheran Church in Japan, which is rapidly moving toward self government.

The annual conference includes clergy and lay representatives from congregations of the Japan Mission.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church, largest Lutheran body in Japan with 20,000 members, sent its first missionary overseas in 1964 to do work among Japanese in Brazil.



# CHRISTIANS AID IN RELIEF AND REHABILITATION IN VIETNAM

In response to a "Proposal for an EACC Initiative in Vietnam," Mr. Hajime Ogawa, director of the Japan Church World Service, Agape Factory for handicapped workers, has left for Saigon to help in the organization of a relief and rehabilitation program in Vietnam.

The proposal was received at the Japan NCC offices from Rev. Alan A. Brash, Secretary for Inter-Church Aid, Mission and Service, EACC.

Rev. Brash, after consultation with D.T. Niles and Kyaw Than recommended a new course of action, namely that the EACC "should offer to the Church leaders in Vietnam to organize a relief and rehabilitation program in Vietnam, and to seek support for it from Churches around the world, using in part, the facilities offered by the WCC Division of Inter-Church Aid."

U Thaung Tin of Burma will be in charge of the program and leave for Saigon after approval is received from the Evangelical Church. U Thaung Tin is a Christian business man of special ability in organizing such work.

According to Kentaro Buma, director of the Japan World Service and NCC-ICA Commission, plans are being made in Japan for a nation-wide campaign for Vietnam relief sponsored by the Commission.

## INCREASING COLLEGE ENROLLMENT AND DETERIORATING EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS

While most private colleges and universities, including Christian institutions, continue to expand with increased enrollment and building programs, the business world continues in the grip of a recession. An increasing number of college graduates are facing a closing employment market.

According to a large weekly magazine's investigation, 60 out of 134 large Japanese companies will be recruiting fewer new employees next year, with 15 companies stating that they would hire no new help.

Only 9 companies, mostly in the banking business, plan to increase their staff, says the weekly. The foodstuff and metal industries, and companies with good export markets such as Honda and Sony, also are not too much affected by the recession.

Higher education institutions are expanding to make room for the crest of the post-war "baby-boom" and for an increasing percentage of high school graduates desiring college training.